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Mat. 22, 42.—What think ye of Christ?

As false and corrupt notions in religion, as well as immorality of conduct, spring from improper conceptions of the Deity and his attributes, I will endeavor to establish such sentiments as may, by the assistance of Revelation, deliver us from these evils. And at the same time demonstrate that Jesus, the Christ, cannot be the supreme God of the universe.

1. As nature and all its phenomena suppose the existence and superintendency of an omniscient and omnipotent cause, it follows that the first cause must be self-existent, and all his attributes unoriginated and necessarily what they are; for a being cannot produce its own attributes, and contingency implies a modifying cause. Now as the proper notion of self or necessary existence is the idea of a being, the supposition of whose nonentity would be an express contradiction, Christ cannot be that self-existent being—for the supposition of his non-existence implies no contradiction whatever; seeing it is agreed by all that the Father is the first cause of all things, and capable of doing whatever is necessary to be done. Neither can he be the self-existent God, for his attributes and life were derived from God, and dependant on him. He never pretended to be either almighty or omniscient, but confessed he was ignorant of some things, and that of himself he could do nothing. The whole history of his life and doctrines depose against his Deity, and raise our thoughts to the one Jehovah, whom he acknowledged as his Father and God.

2. The attributes of the Deity must be infinite, and he must exist every where, in the same manner he exists any where. The contrary supposition would imply a secondary cause, modifying the first, or that God is limited, and capable of improvement. Christ cannot, therefore, be the self-existent God: for the universal scriptures declare that he was limited, being confined to a place; and increased in wisdom and stature. He confessed his dependance on his Father for existence, power, wisdom, and doctrines; his commandment he received and obeyed; him he adored, as his

God, who give him that high commission, which he so honourably discharged; to whom he was accountable for his conduct, and who so liberally rewarded his fidelity, by giving him glory and honour, and exalting him to be Lord, Prince, Saviour, and Judge of men. As the Scriptures nowhere testify that his person consisted of two natures, which indeed would have been impossible, whatever is predicated of his person, must be true of the whole person and nature of Christ. But the Scriptures declare that he was weary and fainted—therefore not Jehovah, who is neither hungry nor faint. That he came from one place and went to another—therefore not Jehovah, who fills heaven and earth with his presence. That he knew not the day of judgment—therefore not omniscient. That not he but the Father performed the miracles which were wrought—therefore not omnipotent. That he did not his own will—therefore subordinate and dependant. That, in all things, he was made like other men—therefore a man, differing only from other men by the high commission he held, the qualifications God bestowed on him, and the honors which the Deity conferred on him for his fidelity, that all men might likewise have hope in God.

3. The Deity must be simple and uncompounded; identically the same every where; without parts, for these must be distinct, and either unintelligent or an infinity of deities.

This proposition is completely opposed to the doctrine of the Trinity; for God, being without parts, cannot be three, but if he can be three, there is no reason why there should not be thirty thousand, agreeably to the catalogue of Grecian mythology. If God be uncompounded, he cannot be composed of Father, Son, and Spirit. But some will say, we only intend three names for the self-same substance. Then I will say, all the sons of Adam may be considered only one person, with myriads of names; for undoubtedly, they have all one nature. If this reasoning be correct, then all Trinities, co-essentialities, co-equalities, modalities, eternal generations, processions, incarnations, and hypostatical unions, are terms fitter for conjurers than Christians. As by the system of the Trinity, it is affirmed, that there are three persons, each perfect in himself and each truly God, and yet that these three are but one perfect God; is this not tantamount to affirming, that there are three, and not three; or, plainly, that three and one are the same thing? Do not such assertions present to the mind of every man a self evident contradiction?

4. There cannot be, in the universe, more than one self-existent being. For if there be a second, he must possess the same attributes, and to the same extent, as the first; and consequently, both must be eternally and necessarily the same, every where alike present, without any possible difference or distinction. and therefore one and the same. Two such beings cannot subsist; and the sup-

position of a second, is only a mere repetition of the being and attributes of the first.

It has long been admitted as an axiom in philosophy, not to admit more causes than are necessary. But all admit, that God, the Father, is cause sufficient for nature and all its appearance. Is it, then, not antiphilosophical, to admit the Son and the Spirit to the claim of being first causes, in the government or formation of the world.

It is entirely surprising, that men should plead for the Deity of Jesus, seeing nothing like divine honours were ever claimed by him; nor did he ever pretend to the attributes of the one Jehovah. Moreover, it would be absurd and blasphemous, to say of God what Christ says of himself. He acknowledges his Father's superiority; confesses his own ignorance of the day of Judgment; that the chief seats in the kingdom of heaven were not at his disposal, but the sole property of his God and Father. He promises, to his disciples, that he would pray the Father, to send the Spirit to be their Comforter; which plainly implies, Christ had not the gifts of the Spirit, till he obtained them by prayer. He declares, he came from God, and would return to him. But it would be absurd to say, he came from himself, and would return to himself. He informs the Jews, that "Whither he went, they could not come." But had he been God, he must have been present wherever the Jews could be. He also, forwarns his disciples, that he would leave them, and go to the Father. Could such language apply to Jehovah, who fills immensity of space with his presence, whose very nature is as widely diffused as the extent of infinite space, and can no more be condensed or limited, than infinite space can be reduced to a point.

The infinite God may communicate more power and wisdom to one man than to another; but he cannot be confined to one place, to the exclusion of another; nor is it possible, that the nature of the infinite Jehovah, can be localized, or inhabit one place more than any other. "Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord. What house can you build me, or where is my place of rest?"

The Sabellian and indwelling schemes, are, therefore, founded in ignorance of the Divine nature, and easily overthrown. For the infinite God, could no more dwell in the body of Jesus, than in that of Paul, or any other man. But if it be said, the Deity of Jesus was infinitely diffused, and omnipresent, then it follows, that Jesus could no more be God, than John, James, Joseph, or any other man. For the Deity is equally present to all, in all, and through all; and consequently, if Jesus be God, then every man in the world is equally God; for, undoubtedly, God is equally present through them all. How weak then, must be the argument, which assumes the Deity of Christ, from the affirmation, that God was in Christ? As well might we infer, that all men are God or gods, for the Scriptures assure us, that God is in them all.

But, methinks, I hear one cry stop, heretic, you blaspheme the Saviour, and I will not attend to your carnal reasonings ! Nay, rather stop thou that judgest, lest thou also be condemned. "When Socrates proclaimed the Unity of God, he was accused of impiety, and forced to drink the lethal, potion. When the renowned Galileo asserted, that the sun and whole firmament of heaven, are not whirled round this earth in four and twenty hours, but that our globe effects this wonderful appearance, by a simple process round its axis, he was prosecuted and imprisoned, for differing in opinion with the Franciscan monks ! When our Saviour bestowed the blessings of his simple and heavenly doctrines on mankind, he was accused of sedition and blasphemy ; he was reviled and persecuted even unto death ! So, when Unitarians maintain, that the Gospel of our Lord is simple and beautiful ; that it teaches nothing in direct opposition to the evident principles of our understandings ; that the broad meaning of Scripture is plain and intelligible ; and that instead of its being opposed to reason, it is upheld and insured, by its unconstrained support ; they are stigmatized as blasphemers and infidels ! But I venture to affirm, their doctrine is a tide in the affairs of men, the progress of which, no bigotry, malevolence, or persecution, can arrest. Like the doctrines of our Saviour, in early days ; or the philosophy of Galileo, in later times, it will rise triumphant ; and time, as it steals along, gradually disclosing the radiant forms of truth, will leave to succeeding ages nothing but unspeakable amazement, that any reasonable creatures could have thought and acted as Trinitarian Christians have done."

Polytheism was the disgrace of human intellect, and the most daring crime of which man has ever been guilty. It lay at the very fountain-head of all that perversity of character and abuse of reason and religion, which has prevailed in the world. When men forgot their Maker and became darkened in their minds, pride and ignorance induced them to vilify the character of the Deity ; humanize God and deify men. This awfully took place, in the Christian world, during the decline of literature and reign of superstition. The meek and lowly Jesus was, contrary to his own doctrine and desire, deified by his weak followers, and the very design of the Gospel subverted.

Though we consider the deity of Jesus, not only antisciptural but physically impossible, yet we shall examine the scripture testimony.

Is. xi. 6, is frequently adduced as proof that Jesus is called the mighty God. But the Hebrew Text should have been translated *The Mighty God shall call him, a wonderful mediator, Father of his age, and the Prince of Peace.* The Greek, Scholar will do well to consult the Vatican Septuagint, where the word God, is wanting. If this reading be correct, all the controversy, about the application of the term, *God*, to Jesus, is forever set at rest. I believe it impossible to produce a text from the bible, where Jesus is called God.

Our ears are often struck with the titles of Jehovah and God, applied to the Saviour; but I venture to assert, that the name of Jehovah, is never given to Christ, in any part of the sacred volume; though it would have proved just nothing, if it had been attributed to him fifty times. Men, altars, places, &c. have been called Jehovah; yet none have hence concluded, that these men and altars were Gods. Joshua signifies Jehovah the Saviour; Elijah, Jehovah my God; but who will believe Joshua or Elijah to have been the eternal first cause of all things.

John i. 1, is the only place, in the whole Bible, where, according to the English Version, Jesus receives the appellation, God; but, that this is a mere appellative term of office, appears from the structure of the Greek phrase, *Theos en ho logos*, which should be rendered "The word was God's or a god," i. e. a divinely commissioned person. Clemens Alexandrinus having cited Gen. iv. 25. observes the word God in this place, must mean the true God; because it has the article before it.

Origen on John, "The Apostle does not say, the God, with the article, but God without the article; because he intended to speak of Christ's authority. The God is the true God, but God without the article intimates authority." Eusebius contra Marcion, p. 127. "The Evangelist could have said the word was the God, with the article, had he thought the Father and the Son to be one, or that the Word was God over all." Epiphanius cited by Bishop Pearson, declares, "If we say God, without the article, we mean a heathen or a false god; but if we say the God, with the article, 'tis evident we mean the living and true God." Where then was Middleton's rule about the Greek article? Where it ought to be, in the depth of oblivion.

Acts 20, 28, "Feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood." This, says Wakefield, is one of those unscriptural texts which sturdy polemics of little learning and no shame are continually obtruding on our notice, to the deception of common readers, and the disgrace of ingenious criticism. No such expression could possibly come from the pen of our Evangelists. No such idea could enter the head of a primitive professor of the gospel. Seven Mss. only, and those of no antiquity and of little value, read *God*. None of the versions support this reading, except the vulgate and Philoxenian—Syriac. Forty-seven Mss. read *Lord and God*, but these also are neither of high antiquity nor of much value. Moreover, this reading is entirely unsupported by the ancient versions, and ecclesiastic writers. Ten Mss. read *Lord*. These are of great antiquity and authority, and of different families. All various readings in which these Mss. agree are admitted as genuine by the best critics. Besides this reading is supported by the most ancient versions and ecclesiastical writers.

The Arabic version has both readings, viz. *Lord* and *God*, which proves the original was corrupted in the time of the translator, and that he made his translation from the Greek, a position which has been disputed. But the Syriac, that most ancient and most excellent version, which would be ill exchanged for all the Mss. of the Greek testament in the world, reads *the church of Christ*. And the Coptic, that other most excellent and accurate version, reads *the church of the Lord*. The Philox, Syriac has *Lord* in the margin. Griesbach reads *Lord*, and declares that on the evidence he could not do otherwise. To those who feel shocked at the idea of God dying, Wakefield proposes relief in the following manner:—Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own son. In proof that blood and son are synonymous, he gives Virgil's authority,

"Projice tela manu, sanguis meus."—Æn. 6. 835.

If this criticism be just, then the text may be fairly read as it stands in the common version, without anything absurd, or without affording the least assistance to the Trinitarian cause.

Rom. 9, 5.—*God over all*. Trinitarians imagine that this is an appellation of Christ, but with what authority, will soon appear. The punctuation of this verse has occasioned much controversy and obscurity. Every able commentator, however, knows that *the original copies were not pointed at all*. Michaelis justly observes, "many obscurities have been occasioned by a false method of punctuation, and every commentator should remedy this by occasional alteration, and not servilely to adhere to the present arrangement." These things being admitted, the 4th and 5th verses form a grand climax, and should be read thus: Israelites to whom belong, the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the law, the service, the promise, the fathers, the Christ according to the flesh, the God over all, blessed be his name, for ever, Amen.

In this translation I have followed Harwood, Whitby, and Slichtingius, names that will always be dear to the church of God and sacred literature. Many of the ancient fathers strictly denied that Christ was God over all, as the common reading in our translation would suggest, which shows that they did not read the passage with the same punctuation or construction found in the English Testament. From Waterland's Vindication, it is abundantly manifest, that Dionysius, Justin, Theophilus, Athenagoras, Tatian, Tertullian, and Hippolytus all asserted that there was a time in which the son was produced, consequently they never imagined him to be *God over all*. Moreover Athanasius himself, contra Sabel, affirms "that Jesus is not the Father, nor as the sabellians say, the only God, all the holy scriptures testify. And again contra Gentes, he says, "he who is strictly the true God, is the Father of Christ.

Phil. 2. 6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery

to be equal with God.* Which may be fairly read thus. Who being in the appearance of a god, did not esteem it a prey to be like a god. In vindication of this reading I observe, *theos* is without the article, and may therefore be read according to the strictest construction of the Greek and English languages, a god. And this rendering best accords with our Lord's intimation, in the tenth chapter of John; and in this text, Paul has, in all probability, a view to this, when he styled him god, in a subordinate sense, meaning a divinely commissioned person. This conjecture receives strength from the use of the article, in the following verse; where the Apostle designates the supreme God, by the terms, *ho Theos*. Moreover Eusebius against Marcel. L. 1. c. 18, cites this very text, to prove that our Lord is not *ho Theos*, God with the article; for he says, "How was he in the form of God, if he was himself, *ho Theos*, God with the article, or the supreme God, and how could he *not think* of the prey of being like God, if he was himself *ho Theos*, the supreme God."

This being admitted, our Lord was in the form or appearance of a god, i. e. of a prophet, or divine messenger, to whom the word of God came, performing as they did, miracles, signs, and wonders which constituted the strongest proofs of a divine commission, and the grand mark of resemblance between the Prophets. In this sense, our Lord thought it no robbery to be like a god, i. e. a Prophet, for he possessed the power of working miracles in confirmation of his mission.

Harpagmon, properly signifies, *rapine or something taken as a prey*, with which the possessor shows an unwillingness to part.—Our Lord's history justifies this interpretation. He never made a public display of miraculous powers, and therefore may be very correctly described, as not considering his gifts as the great prophet of God, or in other words, the form of a god, a prey to be eagerly retained or ostentatiously displayed; but willingly submitted to be treated as another man, and to humble himself to the death of the Cross. And this sense of the word, is confirmed from the design of

* I shall here lay before the reader, the different translations of various eminent Commentators.

Who, being in the likeness of God, on account of that authority and power with which he was invested, was not eager in retaining that likeness to God ———PIERCE.

He did not consider it as a prey to be hastily caught at, or, he did not eagerly desire to be like God. ———NEWCOME.

Did not arrogate to himself, to be equal with God. ———TILLOTSON.

He being in the form of God, did not covet to be honored as God. ———CLARKE.

Being in the form of God, did not assume to be equal to God. ———WHISTON.

Who, Being in the form of God, did not esteem as a prey, this resemblance of God. ———IMPROVED VERSION.

Who, being in the form of God, by reason of the miracles he wrought, took the form of a servant, by laying aside his extraordinary power, and ceasing to work miracles.

——GROTIUS and PRIESTLEY.

the apostle in this passage, which, most evidently, was to hold up our Lord as a patron of humility to his friends at Philippi.

That truly laborious critic, Wetstein, observes "the adversative particle, *but*," which follows ver. 7, shows that by the phrase 'thought it no robbery,' the majesty of Christ, or how great he was, is not declared, but rather his humility, and the manner in which he conducted himself. After Whitby, Newcome, and Schleusner, I prefer rendering the words, *isa Theo, like a god*. In proof of the propriety of this translation, I refer to the Septuagint. Job. 11. 12, "Man is born, *isa ono eremite*, like a wild ass's colt." 40. 15, "Behemoth eateth grass, *isa*, like an ox." These are only two passages out of many, which may be found to support the above reading.

In allusion to this text, we find language entirely corroborative of the interpretation I have given of the word, *harpagmon*, in the form of an ex-communication, at a council in Rome; 1076 "*Beate Petre. ego non repinam arbitratus sum, ad sedem tuam ascendere, potiusque volui vitam meam in peregrinatione finire*. Frabrit. Bibli. Gr. 11.

Some of the fathers translated this text thus; he thought not of the robbery of being like, or equal to God. Novatian cap. 22. Although he was in the form of God, *non est rapinam arbitratus*; he did not think of the robbery, or prey of being equal to God. Origen on John, "Christ appeared more divine, when he humbled himself to death, then if he had thought of the prey of being like God, and had not become a servant, for the salvation of the world."

Col. 2. 9. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. This, I suppose, has been thought as strong a proof of Christ's divinity as any passage in the bible. But surely none will imagine, that Godhead means more than God; & if not, could Paul wish all the Ephesians to be Gods, when he prayed chap. 3, 19, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God? Surely not. If all the fulness of God dwelt in Christ, then the fullness of God, and the fulness of Christ, are the same. But Paul says a well instructed Christian has arrived to the fulness of Christ. Ephes. 3, 19, and 4, 13.—Hence it is evident, that, in all these places, the fulness of God, or of Christ, means nothing more than a perfect acquaintance with the Gospel; and is a phrase of the same import as the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Phil. 3. 8. Again if God dwelling in Christ, make him God, the indwelling of God, or Christ, will make men Gods also. Gal. 2, 20. Col. 1, 17. Ephes. 3, 17. The fulness of Christ and the word, or Gospel of Christ, are synonymous. Surely, it is full time for men to give up the foolish idea of God, dwelling in a Temple, being shut up in an ark, or incarcerated in the body of a man. I challenge all the world of believers in the Godhead of Christ, to find me, in all the bible, so strong a proof of Christ's Divinity, as I can find for the Godhead of every Christian, in 2 Peter 1, 4.

Heb. 1. 8. Some think Christ is here called God by the sacred writer ; but this is a great mistake. The verse should have been translated, *concerning the son he saith, God is thy throne forever.*—The preposition, *pros*, is translated *of*, in the 7th verse and should have been so rendered in the eighth. Thus also the apostle speaks in Rom. 8. 31. *What shall we say to these things, i. e. concerning these things ;* for so the phrase, *Ti eroumen pros tauta*, should have been translated. To the learned reader, the accuracy of this translation will appear from the following parallel,

Ho thronos sou, ho Theos eis ton aiona—*God is thy throne forever.*
He meris mou, ho Theos eis ton aiona,—*God is my portion forever.*

In both these examples, the word, God, is in the nominative ; and seeing they are parallel readings, taken from the septuagint of the 45th & 73d Psalm, they should be translated accordingly. To urge this passage, therefore, as a proof of Christ's deity, on the authority of God, manifests the greatest puerility in biblical knowledge, or a knavish disposition to impose on the credulous.

I am aware that some will consider these remarks too censorious, especially in relation to the commentary of Dr. A. Clarke on the passage ; but they are just and well merited. The Doctor says "this verse is very properly considered a proof, and indeed a strong one, of the Divinity of Christ. Some late versions have endeavored to avoid the evidence of this proof by translating the words thus, *God is thy throne forever* ; and, if this version be correct, it is certain, the text can be no proof of the doctrine." Now we not only say, that this version is correct ; but we also affirm, that the Doctor knows it to be so : Notwithstanding he conceals his knowledge, here and elsewhere, in his commentary ; and argues, through pretended ignorance, for an absurd and antiquated dogma, contrary to well known and established facts ! ! !

He affirms "Jesus must be God ; and the design of the apostle is to prove this. The whole scope of the place requires the word, God, to be in the vocative ; and the original Hebrew cannot be consistently translated any other way." Did the learned Doctor suppose that all were ignorant of Hebrew but himself ; and could he be so careless as to openly commit himself by referring to the Targums ? If the Rabbins understood the forty fifth Psalm of the Messiah ; and if the Hebrew of the sixth verse cannot be consistently translated otherwise, than by declaring the Messiah to be *the eternal God* ; how could these Rabbins still continue to believe him only a man ? Alas ! *how have the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished ! !*

The Hebrew, *kisaca Elohim olam vaad*, is well and correctly translated by the apostle Heb. 1. 8. and by Wakefield in his version of this passage ; and the Doctor's objections amount to a learned am-

bage, pitifully silly !! The Doctor perceiving his labor to be like that of Sisyphus, calls in the assistance of his learned friend, H. S. Boyd, who appears on the theatre in surprise, that "none of those, who deny the Divinity of Christ, have had critical acumen enough to discover that the words cannot possibly admit of being translated, *God is thy throne.*" We shall soon see the extent of this learned gentleman's "critical acumen."

He produces an orthodox rule, about the use of the Greek article; and affirms it is always affixed to the subject, but not to the predicate of a sentence; offers, *Theos en ho logos*, as an example, and tells us, the Greek Translators of the old, and the authors of the New Testament, write agreeably to this rule !! Now if the above rule was known to the Greeks, we would naturally infer every deviation to be a grammatical error; and it would have been incorrect for John to have said, *ho Theos en ho logos*. But we have seen in our quotations from Origen and Eusebius, on John 1. 1. that according to their opinion of Greek phraseology, the Evangelist could have said, *ho Theos en ho logos, the word was the God.* All the knowledge therefore of the Doctor and his learned friend, on the structure of a Greek sentence, dwindles into insignificance before the luminous criticism of Origen and Eusebius—Mr. Boyd acknowledges that "if any passage in the Psalms have a substantive noun, and its predicate in the same sentence with the article prefixed to both, then, indeed, his argument will be good for nothing." We have produced two passages of this description, from the forty fifth and seventy third Psalms; and can produce many from the New Testament !! See two examples in one verse, 1 Cor. 15. 56. Alas ! unfortunate Goliath, thou art slain with thine own sword ! Is it not shockingly awful to hear rational men, professing to believe only in one God, represent that God talking to another God, equal to himself. Alas ! Alas ! Christianity, how art thou wounded in the house of thy friends !

1 John 3. 16. The word, *God*, in this verse, is in italics, showing that it was interpolated by the translators. If it be asked, why they did so? we answer, to support the monstrous doctrine of a human, suffering, and dying god!! The English reading has only the authority of one MS. and that of very little credit! It is rejected by Mill, Wetstein, Bengel, Griesbach, Wakefield, Newcome et c. If we should admit the common reading, the pronoun, *he*, could not refer to God, because the text would then teach a doctrine of the most shocking nature, the death of the eternal, infinite, and immortal Jehovah !!

1 John 5. 20. "To paraphrase this passage of true religion, says Dr. Doddridge, is quite enervating the force of scripture; and taking a liberty with plain words, by no means to be allowed. It is an argument for the Deity of Christ, which almost all, who have

written in its defense, have urged : and which, I think, none, who have opposed it, have ever appeared to answer." The whole strength of the Dr's. argument consists in referring the pronoun, *this*, to Christ, the nearest antecedent, let us apply his reasoning to a similar case, 2 John 7. *Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus the Christ, is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and antichrist.* Now according to Doddridge's mode of reasoning, to refer the singular pronoun, *this*, to the remote and plural antecedent, deceivers, "is taking a liberty with plain words, by no means to be allowed." By the rule adopted in the reasoning of the Dr. and others, whereby they would prove that Jesus is the true God, they can prove him to be a deceiver and antichrist; which, indeed, he must have been, had he pretended to be what they erroneously call him. In both places, the pronoun, *outos*, *this*, which usually belongs to the proximate, must be referred to the remote antecedent the deceiver and antichrist is he who confesses not that Jesus is come in the flesh or that he was a real man.—The true God is that being, the knowledge of whom, Jesus taught his disciples.

"Some moderns, says Dr. S. Clarke, refer the pronoun, *this*, to Christ, who is mentioned immediately before; but others, with all the ancients, and more agreeably to John's style, John 17, 3, understand it of God the Father, who is also mentioned a little before.—The construction is not difficult. *We know that the son of God is come, and has given us understanding that we may know him that is true*, *ton alethinon Theon*, the true God: (So the most and best Mss. have it, in like manner as John 17. 3.) *and we are in him that is true* i. e. the true God; for the construction of the words manifestly require them to be understood of the same person; by, or through, *his son Jesus Christ*, (agreeably to the Bishops' bible in the time of Henry the Eighth.) *This is the true God and eternal life.* No writer, before the time of the council of Nice, interprets the words, *this is the true God*, concerning Christ; and how they were understood in the following age, appears from the manner in which Epiphanius argues; "Christ, says he, ought to be acknowledged the true God, though not so called by St. John." We should carefully remember, that the writers of the New Testament, instead of putting the relative in the neuter gender as the Latins do, when it refers to an antecedent sentence, made the relative to agree with the following noun. *Outos* has here the same signification as *touto*. i. e. this belief in the mission of Christ, and knowledge of the true God is eternal life. Compare Philip. 1. 28, Eph. 3. 13. and Mat. 7. 12. Dr. Whitby adopts this manner of reading and explaining this passage, and says "thus the disciple well accords with his Master and only teaches what he had learned of him, John 17. 3."

We have now examined this famous passage on which, as Dod-

dridge admits, orthodoxy has laid its foundation. We have also discovered this boasted fabric to have been built on the sand; and its materials to be hay, wood, and stubble. It cannot stand the ordeal. The rains and winds will carry it away: Seeing it cannot abide the trial of enlightened criticism, but is forced to sculk into the dark shades of ignorance and mysticism, where fraud engenders delusion and superstition, it must soon retreat from the theatre of the Christian world, though it leaves millions of spectators to wonder after the beast!

We have the testimony of Epiphanius and Athanasius, two of the most celebrated fathers, that the Apostle does not in this passage call Christ the true God. Their superior knowledge of the Greek ought to put to the blush modern smatterers, & the names of Clarke and Whitby should put to silence the tongues of those who are theologically, the lame and the blind.

Rev. 1. 11. I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. Dr. Doddridge, in his note on this passage, says, I cannot forbear recording it, that this text has done more than any other, in the bible, towards preventing me from giving into that scheme, which would make our Lord nothing more than a Deified creature." All men are more or less blinded by prejudice; and had not the Doctor been affected by this too general contagion, he would have seen, that no system of theology, adopted by any sect of Christians, tends more manifestly than his own, to represent Jesus as a 'Deified creature.'

But the good Doctor was not aware that he rested his faith on a passage, disavowed by all antiquity, as a spurious interpolation. It is wanted in the Alexandrine, Vatican, Ephrem, and 31 other MSS. In the Coptic, Syriac, Aethiopic, Armenian, Slavonic, & Vulgate Versions. It is also excluded from the editions of Complutum, Geneva, Plantin, Bengel, and Griesbach, and from the translations of Newcome, the Improved Version, and the Catholic Testament of Rheims.

Alpha and Omega are the names of the first and last letters in the Greek Alphabet, and are fitly paraphrased, *the beginning and the end*. When these terms are applied to Christ, they are qualified by some explanatory phrase, as *I was dead*—chap. 1. 17. and 2. 8: but when applied to the great Eternal, they are used in the most absolute and unqualified manner, as in Rev. 1. 8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God, (as Griesbach and the Vulgate read) who is, was, and is to come, the Almighty. Because Jehovah assumes this title, Is. 44. 6, and Jesus adopts the same, Rev. 1. 17, men have inferred that Christ is God; but the context shows the fallacy of such reasoning; for he, who says, *I am the first and the last*, says also, *I was dead*! O ye believers in the Deity of Jesus, could the Eternal Jehovah die?

By the phrase, *I am the first and the last*, the Saviour means no

more than that he is the beginning and the end of the Christian dispensation; or that by the commission and power of Almighty God, he set in motion that mighty system, which will hereafter include every rational inhabitant of this world; and will finally complete that glorious dispensation, by which the countless millions of Adam's race, will be led on by him as the Captain of their Salvation, to glory, honor, and immortality. Thus Jesus, by his obedience and death, shall have the glory and happiness of being the author and finisher of Salvation for all the offspring and family of Heaven, Alleluiah.



FOR THE ROCHESTER MAGAZINE.

To the Rev. William Brown,

SIR, To quell excitements made by popular greatness and disguised malignity; and to discharge a duty which I owe to the public, especially in this vicinity, and demanded by justice, theological truth, and moral propriety, I solicit your attention to a few observations, relative to our late controversy; pleading no other apology for the course I have adopted, than this; that as the transactions to which this letter relates, were conducted publicly, the letter may be considered as a public demand.

It seems you feel dissatisfied with my mode of treating your remarks on Mat. 25, 46, made on Sept. 5. ult. but in what manner did you sir, treat the subject of the text? You said it related to the close of all human concerns; that there would be a final separation of the two classes designated; that the one, through the imputation of Christ's righteousness, would be received to heaven; and the other banished, for their sins, to endless wretchedness.—Now, sir, according to your premises, laid down on the eve of Sept. 8th, God has chosen a certain number of the fallen race, before the foundation of the world, to eternal glory, out of his *free grace*, without any foresight of faith, good works, or conditions performed by the creature; and was pleased to ordain the rest of mankind to wrath, on account of their sins. If so, your comment on Mat. 25, must be false, for your comment and creed are contradictory. According to the one, the righteous are saved by good works; by the other, they are glorified through free grace without any view to their works of righteousness! But for what were the wicked created? Ans. for nothing! for God could not pass them by, and ordain them to wrath for their sins, until they had sinned.

consequently the greater part of mankind were entirely useless before they committed those offences for which they were ordained to wrath, for the praise of god's vindictive justice. Pardon me, sir, for using the small g. I only speak of Calvin's god, but the God, *who is good unto all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works*, is not vindictive. Sir, when you quoted, in your sermon, *I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat*, as the cause of the damnation of the wicked, why had you not courage and honesty enough, to quote the 35th verse, *I was an hungered and ye gave me meat*, as the cause of the salvation of the righteous? But this you thought would not answer your purpose. If you imagine you *were chosen before the foundation of the world, that you should be holy and without blame*; look at your conduct in mutilating the scriptures, and read Rev. 22. 19.

Sir, why do you call my manner of attack abrupt? I only called the attention of your congregation, and exposed your errors.—I informed the audience your text and context related to the close of the legal, and commencement of the gospel dispensation; and directed them to the eleventh chapter of Romans for a solution of the question on God's authority. I told them and you, that the everlasting punishment, consisted in the desolation of the house of Israel, until the time come, in which they shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Mat. 23, 38: or from the time that blindness in part had happened to them, till the fulness of the Gentiles come; then that Israel who went away into everlasting, or age-lasting punishment, should be saved. Rom. 11, 25.

I will not follow you in all your wanderings on the memorable *fifth*. You spoke of the Trinity, the hypostatical union of Christ's two natures, and the sin against the holy spirit; all of which seemed to me entirely foreign to the text. But you cited twice a passage from Rev. 6, 15, which may deserve notice. Permit me here sir, to observe, that you are as deeply interested in that passage as any man whatever; whether you be a great man, as you seem to think; seeing you boast that four like me, moulded together, would not be a match for you; or whether you be a free man, or bound by Calvin's errors, for you are either free or bound, but for this abuse of the scriptures, you are requested to read Rev. 22, 18. Again you have reported that I "flew from the Restoration to the Universalist system." Did I not uniformly insist on the impossibility of an immortal being suffering in any state? Truth will not allow you to answer in the negative.

Again, sir, you have reported that you had the advantage, on account of having always been acquainted with my doctrine, having frequently argued, with the members of your church, against your own sentiments to see what you could do!! Remember what you

told the Rev. Mr. Skeel, on your interview with him, when he asked you if you understood his doctrine! Reflect, sir, and read Rev. 21. 8. If you understood the doctrine, you would not contend so wickedly against it. The doctrine has been taught by all God's holy prophets, Acts 3. 21; and what are your feeble efforts or those of all the powers of darkness, against the testimony or oath of Omnipotence! Look at it, sir. By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in thy seed (which is Christ, Gal. 3. 16,) shall all the nations of the earth be blest—Gen. 22. 16. Look unto me and be ye saved,—How many? A few that God chose from the fallen race? No! ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH. I have sworn by myself, the word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return: that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. *Surely shall say—Who? Every tongue* (for the word, *one*, being in italic, is interpolated) *in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* Is. 45. 22—24. Where is your merciless doctrine of reprobation now? Where it always was, resting on the sandy foundation laid by Austin and Calvin, without a 'thus saith the Lord,' or one word from all God's holy prophets, or apostles to support it.

Finally you say "I shall not wish to meet you again, or give you another challenge." But did you not give the challenge? I told you on the fifth, that error should be corrected *where* and *when* it was committed; and called upon you to answer me then, but you refused, saying you would meet me at another time, and accordingly I appointed the time and place. But why shall I *not wish to meet you again*? Is it on account of the victory you obtained from the boasted advantage of having been always acquainted with Universalism? You dare not publish an answer to this question, in the affirmative. But, sir, why should I shun the debate? Is it to avoid the labor of quoting scripture for you, as well as myself, or of preventing you from using Adam Clark's notes instead of the law and the testimony. Sir, flatter not yourself, for you can 'beat the air' better than handle an argument. Your Dagon, alias, your self-sufficiency, is had in honor, only when you are trumpeting your own praise and refuting your man of straw. I consider your saying, that I should not want to meet you again (implying that I dare not) as a challenge of the lowest order. I regret that your conduct called forth so severe reflections; but, sir, it will be soon enough to put on your laurels when I refuse to meet you.

Yours with suitable respect,

Junius, Sept. 23, 1824.

WILLIAM I. REESE.

TO THE PUBLIC.

As some of the public prints have announced the establishment of a Missionary paper in this village, we are led, though unwillingly, to say something of it, but more especially of its Editor, Mr. Blanchard. We learn that he is pleased to call it a *Hell fire paper*, and we naturally expect that wherever there is hell-fire, the Devil is near; and in the present case we have abundant reason to believe it. Mr. Blanchard, in his vagrant peregrinations, for the purpose of obtaining a more ample subscription for his *Hell-fire paper*, has reported that the Magazine is stopped! That the editor has absconded!! And after a detail of several slanders, too hideous to mention, he confirms all, saying he speaks from personal knowledge!! But as every man, in ROCHESTER and its Vicinity, has the opportunity of knowing these reports to be *infamous falsehoods*, we caution the public not to credit *his malignant slanders*. Had any believer of *that doctrine, wickedly called licentious*, acted as Mr. B. his conduct would have been loudly reprehended; but when men think their God does evil, by forming a Devil and preparing a Hell, in order *that Good may come*, it is not strange, that they should imitate him, whom they have adopted as a model!!

THE MAGAZINE has labored under some embarrassments during the last quarter. Many Subscribers, perfectly able to assist, have been alike inattentive to its interests and their own promise! Several Post-Offices have either destroyed the numbers or charged more than *double postage*. Notwithstanding we assure the public, *that no fanaticism nor caballing intrigues of the enemy, shall either stop the Magazine, or cause its Editor to abscond!* He possesses a bold independence, which looks down with manly contempt on the Lilliputian efforts of unprincipled men!!!

Ever grateful to our friends for their patronage, we propose to CONTINUE, ENLARGE, & IMPROVE THE MAGAZINE, fully determined that it shall be inferior to no religious periodical work, in the Christian World! To its pages we refer with all that confidence, which an extensive acquaintance with men, opinions, and books, has inspired; fearing not to affirm, that it contains the most concise, systematical, and comprehensive view of rational Christianity ever published.

THE SECOND VOLUME, shall contain a much greater variety than the FIRST, and, agreeably to the title, consist of ESSAYS, EXTRACTS, REVIEWS, and BIBLICAL CRITICISMS: and the work shall be published, monthly, for TWO DOLLARS per annum, payable, *half yearly*, IN ADVANCE.

N. B. Subscribers may engage yearly, or half yearly, as shall be most convenient.